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SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1898.

MODELS OF EXTINCT VERTEBRATES.*

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THERE are certain obligations resting upon the curators of metropolitan museums from which curators of university museums should enjoy a grateful immunity. These mainly involve the difficult undertaking of arousing interest and spreading accurate information among a very large class of inquisitive but wholly uninformed people. If these obligations are unfulfilled the metropolitan museum fails in its purpose and deserves the withdrawal of public support.

With this general idea in mind, members of the Department of Vertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum have been making a special study of all the legitimate methods of attracting the attention and interest of visitors. Among these methods are the series of water-color restorations of extinct vertebrates, executed by the animal painter, Mr. Charles Knight, with the aid of various scientific suggestions and criticisms. The preparation of these drawings involves a far more careful preliminary study than would generally be supposed. The artist begins by making a number of models in wax, based upon the actual proportions and muscular indications of the skeleton, and by

* Catalogue of Casts, Models, Photographs and Restorations of Fossil Vertebrates, issued by the Department of Vertebrate Paleontology, American Museum of Natural History, April, 1898.